

Certification of DSCYF Management and Client Services Reports

Effective 9/1/98

I. Purpose

Report Certification is the Department's process for ensuring the validity, reliability, utility, and confidentiality of reports on clients and services prepared with Department-generated data. This document sets forth the policy of the Department of Services to Children, Youth and their Families (DSCYF) for Certification of Management and Client Services Reports. The purpose of this policy is to assure that:

- A. Data are handled responsibly;
- B. Divisional Management review and approve reports before they are certified for distribution;
- C. Department Management has timely access to reports;
- D. Reports meet technical standards and yield the information needed;
- E. Scheduled reports designed for a specific purpose not be substantively modified without consent of the unit that requested the original report.

The aim of this policy is to facilitate, and not to hinder, communication within and between Divisions of the Department, other Departments and state agencies, and the public.

II. Policy

Report certification is the process of achieving the purposes described above. It is a system of report development and approval which involves program managers, Divisional and Department Management, and data experts to ensure that DSCYF is working with accurate and timely data which are shared. Certified reports are recorded in the Departmental Report Inventory. The Department, to help fulfill these duties, has issued a Report Management Handbook, "Report Development and Certification Standards."

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to supercede any rules, regulations, guidelines, procedures, forms and deadlines set forth by Federal and State agencies, including this Department, regarding management and client

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services information and reports. . This policy is aligned with the Freedom of Information Act (Del. C., Chapter 29 section 10), The Delaware Public Records Law (Del. C. Chapter 5 Title 29. Subchapter 1) and the Department Policies on Records Retention (11/1/93) and Confidentiality (#205, 4/4/89, rev. 2/27/96).

III. Scope

This policy establishes standards and puts forth guidelines to be followed in certifying reports defined below using Department-generated data on clients and services, and data and information relevant to client services, that is to be distributed internally or externally. The policy applies to all users of DSCYF information systems.

IV. Definitions

- A. Certification - Recognition that a report meets defined standards including, but not limited to, validity of data, technical accuracy, and usefulness for both internal and external use.
- B. Report - An organized compilation of data, which may include text, charts, tables, and other graphic representation of information.
- C. Certified report - A report which (1) meets certification standards, and has been (2) approved by appropriate Division and Department Management or their designees, and (3) transmitted by designated Divisional representatives to the inventory maintained by the Division of Management Services, and (4) recorded in the inventory. Once a report has been recorded in the inventory, it is considered certified. All reports in the DSCYF inventory on the effective date of this policy are considered certified.
- D. Report Types
 - 1. *Executive Reports* - Management reports as identified by the Management Leadership Team, focusing on goals, outcomes, and

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2. performance measures.
3. *Management/ Operational Reports* - Reports to assist supervisors and staff providing or overseeing services and/or client data.
4. *Specialized reports* - Reports that are developed to address specific and timely questions.

Ad hoc reports are those (1) which address specific, limited or time-sensitive questions formulated by individual staff or task groups within a Division, or (2) which represent steps in routine report development. Guidance regarding the definition, development, or distribution of ad hoc reports is available to staff within each Division. Each Division is responsible for internal validation of ad hoc reports formulated by its staff. Ad hoc reports are not subject to the certification process described in this policy.

V. Standards

The criteria for certification are listed here. Checklists, report inventory forms, and other helpful information, can be found in the "Report Development and Certification Standards" Handbook.

- A. Data and information sources will be mature, valid, and reliable.
- B. Data and information will be analyzed and manipulated using DSCYF recognized analysis tools.
- C. The report will conform to Confidentiality standards.
- D. Executive Reports will contain the following Management Leadership approved format and critical elements. (A template is provided in the Handbook.)
 1. DSCYF outcome goal,
 2. Division or program performance indicator;
 3. Operational definitions;
 4. Policy-defined guides - timelines;
 5. Time period and frequency of report refreshes

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a) Reporting periods and quarters based on Fiscal Years (vs. calendar)

6. Analysis

E. The graphic display of information in the report will be statistically correct and appropriate for level of data analysis performed.

F. The report will contain these minimum characteristics

1. Appropriate certification documentation
2. Actual dates that report covers (i.e. June 1 - 30, 1997; July 1, 1997 to September 31, 1997)
3. Data run date (date when data is extracted from a database)
4. Report certification number (assigned when report is recorded in the inventory database)

G. The report inventory will specify the distribution.

1. Internal use (by job title)
2. External use

VI. Roles and Responsibilities

The Division of Management Services has the responsibility to administer data management, provide technical assistance in writing and approving reports, arrange for production of reports too complex for operating Division personnel, and manage the Report Inventory.

In the context of Departmental Management, the operating Division which is responsible for the services and/or client data represented or counted in reports is responsible for internally approving reports which concern its programs or activities. For Departmental reports under the scope of this policy which include data on clients of multiple divisions, participation by those same Divisions in the certification process is required.

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VII. Remedial Action

Unauthorized release of uncertified reports that fall within the scope of this policy may be sanctioned by administrative and/or disciplinary action.

VIII. Implementation

This policy becomes effective upon signature of the Cabinet Secretary.